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**U. S. Attorney's Briefing**

It is gratifying to see how adept young people are in mastering computer skills, especially in navigating the Internet. We in law enforcement are, however, concerned with the use of the Internet by criminals to prey on young people. Our prosecutors work in close cooperation with investigators of the FBI, U.S. Customs Service, Postal Inspectors and local law enforcement to identify those who use the Internet to traffic in child pornography and take advantage of children for criminal purposes.

The cases summarized in this Newsletter demonstrate the seriousness of these crimes, and our commitment to actively prosecute those who use the Internet to exploit children. Parents are, of course, the first line of defense against Internet child predators. The Department of Justice, in cooperation with other federal agencies, recently launched a Web site to offer information on a wide range of issues that confront parents in raising a child. I recommend it as a resource for parents of children of all ages:

[www.parentingresources.ncjrs.org](http://www.parentingresources.ncjrs.org)

I am proud of the outstanding work of the men and women of this office. Two of our lawyers, Kenneth Magidson and Gordon Young, recently received national awards for their leadership in narcotics and environmental cases.

You can access this report and additional information concerning our activities through our Web site: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/txs>

Your comments are always welcome.

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**MAJOR CRIMES SECTION CASES**

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**Arrest in Houston Mall Leads to Conviction in  
Child Pornography and Enticement of Minor Case**

Ronald Davis was arrested on charges that he communicated over the Internet with an individual he thought was a 14-year-old girl. The girl was really an undercover HPD officer. According to the indictment, the defendant transported an image of child pornography over the Internet. The defendant was arrested when he came to a shopping mall to meet the girl. Davis pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore to transporting child pornography in interstate commerce by computer, and to attempting to entice a minor to engage in sex. The maximum penalty he faces for each violation is 15 years and fine up to \$250,000 when he is sentenced in October. After his arrest in Houston, Davis was named in a federal child pornography indictment in Georgia. AUSA: Charles Escher; AGENCY: FBI & HPD.

**South African Sentenced For Child Exploitation**

Daniel Francois De Groenewald, 51, of Roodepoort, South Africa was sentenced to 108 months by U. S. District Judge David Hittner. De Groenewald was convicted for transporting child pornography in interstate commerce and traveling with intent to engage in a sexual act with a juvenile. AUSA: Eric Smith; AGENCY: FBI.

**Child Pornography on Fire Marshal's Computer**

A computer technician working on Fire Department computer found child pornography being stored in the computer. An investigation confirmed the technician's suspicions, and Wesley Slanina, of Webster, was arrested. He was convicted of possession of child pornography, and will be sentenced before U. S. District Judge Samuel Cummings in October. Slanina faces up to ten years confinement and a fine up to \$500,000. AUSA: Daniel Rodriguez; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Kidnap charges filed against Houston man**

Seven year old Natali did not return home after a trip on her bike to the nearby bakery in East Houston. Her sister remembered she saw a man following her. A week after she was lost, FBI agents found her at a church in Miami thanks to a tip from a Houston bus company. Natali's neighbor, a 24 year old Mexican National, has been charged with kidnapping. He is being detained by INS and faces up to life in prison and fines up to \$250,000. AUSA Don Calvert; AGENCY FBI & INS

### **Salt Lake City Mortician Indicted For Intent To Engage In Illegal Sex Acts With a Child**

For two months Benjamin Wright communicated on the Internet with a person he believed to be a 13-year-old boy. Wright was arrested in Houston after he traveled from Salt Lake City to Houston in order to have illegal sexual relations with the boy. Wright, 37, was indicted for interstate travel in order to engage in illegal sex acts with a minor child. Wright faces imprisonment for up to 5 years, plus a \$250,000 fine. AUSA: Mike Schultz; AGENCY: FBI & HPD.

### **Georgia Man Indicted: Intent To Engage In Sex with a Juvenile**

Jonathan Christopher Wood, 53, was indicted by a federal grand jury for travel with the intent to engage in a sexual act with a juvenile. Wood is in custody pending trial on the charge which has a maximum statutory sentence of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Trial is scheduled for August 21. AUSA: Don Calvert; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Armed Bank Robber to Spend 71 Years in Prison**

John Anthony Taylor was sentenced to 852 months and Trent Delee Bonner was sentenced to 87 months in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Lynn Hughes for armed bank robbery. Bonner pled guilty to being the get away driver for the Bank of America robbery. Taylor was also charged in that robbery, as well as the July 1999 robbery of Houston Commerce Bank, and the August 1999 robbery of the Wells Fargo Bank. During the Wells Fargo Bank robbery, Taylor shot Security Officer Wilbur White in the head. Taylor stood trial and was convicted on three counts of bank robbery and three counts of the use of a firearm in connection with a violent crime. AUSA: Don Calvert; AGENCY: FBI, HPD & Harris Co. Sheriff's Office.

### **Houston Man Faces 20 Years For Bank Robbery**

A 26-year-old was indicted by a federal grand jury for the robbery of the Bank United on Fuqua in Houston. The maximum statutory sentence the defendant faces is up to 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. AUSA: Don Calvert; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Laredo Man Sentenced For International Transportation of Stolen Property**

While working as a salesman for United Rentals of North America, Luis Garcia stole equipment and sold it to a Mexican national. Garcia manipulated accounts of legitimate United Rentals customers to conceal the thefts. U.S. District Judge Keith Ellison sentenced Luis Alberto Garcia to one year and one day after his guilty plea of transporting stolen property from Laredo to Mexico. Judge Ellison ordered Garcia to pay an additional \$72,527.19 in restitution to United Rentals. AUSA: Dixie Morrow; AGENCY: FBI.

### **HPD Investigation of Auto Theft Leads to Passport Fraud Conviction.**

The title to a Lexus stolen in Canada was transferred to Michigan in the name of Paul Krejci and was then sold to a Houston woman. An inspection of the VIN number revealed that it was false. HPD then discovered that the car purchased by the woman was the same car stolen in Toronto. When the defendant was arrested, he had an Ohio drivers license in the name of Paul Krejci, bearing a photograph of the defendant, who, it was discovered, had previously applied for a U.S. passport in the name of Richard Morales. Fingerprints established that the defendant's true name is Izeddin Alyousef, born in Amman, Jordan. Alyousef, 27, pled guilty and is facing ten years and a fine up to \$250,000 at sentencing in September. AUSA: Richard Harris; AGENCY: HPD

### **False Statements Result in Passport Fraud Conviction**

Filiberto Velazquez pled guilty before U.S. District Judge David Hittner to making false statements in an application and use of a U.S. Passport, and fraud in connection with identification documents. These charges stem from an investigation into Velazquez' fraudulent application for a U.S. passport. He faces up to 25 years and a fine of up to \$500,000. AUSA: Daniel Rodriguez; AGENCY: Diplomatic Security Service.

### **Man with 25 Identities Applies for Citizenship**

A man using the name David Ipi was indicted for making false statements in applications for U.S. passports, identity fraud and illegal reentry. Investigation revealed that he had twice been deported to Nigeria, was known by at least 25 aliases, and recorded 6 birthdays. Defendant was charged after investigators of the U.S. State Department determined that he previously applied for a passport in the name of his deceased brother-in-law. His true identity is still unknown to federal authorities. AUSA: Mike Schultz; AGENCY: U.S. State Department.

### **Escape Attempt Adds 94 Months**

Jose Guzman-Posos and others attempted to escape federal custody at the Cameron County detention center in Brownsville. The plan was to excavate through cinder block with a metal rod broken from an air conditioning gate. Guzman-Posos was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Hilda Tagle to 94 months after federal jury found him guilty. AUSA: Lynn Kirkpatrick & Mark Dowd; AGENCY: USMS.

### **Too Easy Payment Plan**

Juan Rodriguez' only legitimate source of income was social security disability retirement. Questions arose when the Harlingen man spent more than \$350,000 purchasing vehicles and equipment. Investigators found that the money was part of an alien smuggling operation. Rodriguez was convicted of money laundering and monetary transactions with criminal proceeds. He faces 20 years and fines up to \$500,000 at sentencing on August 28<sup>th</sup>. AUSA: Adela Kowalski-Garza; AGENCY: IRS & US Border Patrol.

### **Transporting Immigrants for \$1,300 Each**

Harris County Sheriff's Deputies responded to a call regarding persons being held against their will at a residence in Houston. A search revealed 19 immigrants who were illegally in the U.S. They had waded across the Rio Grande near Piedras Negras, Mexico and had been guided to a waiting pickup truck. Francisco Ramirez-Herrera was found guilty of holding the immigrants until he could collect the \$1300 smuggling fee for each immigrant. He faces up to 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. AUSA: Douglas Davis; AGENCY: INS & Harris Co. Sheriff's Office.

### **Deported Criminal Immigrants Who Return to Commit Charged with Reentry After Deportation**

Those indicted for illegal reentry are convicted felons with a history of violent crime, drugs, weapon possession or numerous reentries into the U.S. The following represent reentry cases sentenced in June and July:

#### **Juan Manuel Gonzalez: 96 months**

**Prior convictions:** voluntary manslaughter, burglary, possession of drugs, and theft.

#### **Geraldo Mendoza-Martinez: 87 months**

**Prior convictions:** 3 crack cocaine felonies.

#### **Jesus Lopez-Cervantes: 87 months**

**Prior convictions:** burglary, child endangerment and disarming a police officer.

#### **Artemio Hernandez: 80 months**

**Prior convictions:** 2 burglary ( motor vehicle).

#### **Jesus Vasquez Iniguez: 70 months**

**Prior convictions:** 4 DWI and resisting arrest.

#### **Eloy Marquez-Terrazas: 57 months**

**Prior convictions:** burglary and theft.

#### **Duciderio Hernandez-Zarazua: 46 months**

**Prior convictions:** attempted sexual assault.

AUSA: Douglas Davis; AGENCY: INS.



The U.S. Attorney's Office and federal, state and local law enforcement agencies are working with the Texas Attorney General and the Governor's Criminal Justice Division to enhance prosecution of armed criminals. To insure armed gun criminals and gun law violators are prosecuted, two Special Assistant U. S. Attorney's have been added to our staff through a cooperative agreement with the State. The special prosecutors work with prosecutors of the Major Crimes Section to apply federal laws that remove armed criminals from our communities.

Community-based public safety programs such as Weed and Seed are important partners in promoting public awareness of the strict enforcement of laws that keep guns out of hands of those prohibited to use or possess firearms:

- ⇒ Convicted felon (state or federal),
- ⇒ Fugitive from another state,
- ⇒ One who is subject of a Restraining Order or convicted of domestic violence,
- ⇒ Alien illegally in the U.S.,
- ⇒ Narcotics addict, or one who is
- ⇒ Adjudicated mentally incompetent.

Federal law also prohibits illegal possession of a:

- ⇒ Stolen firearm,
- ⇒ Machine gun,
- ⇒ Sawed-off shotgun or rifle,
- ⇒ Silencer, or a
- ⇒ Firearm with an obliterated serial number.

Federal firearms laws carry "Hard Time" sentences. A person convicted for possessing a firearm after having been convicted of a prior felony offence in either state or federal court faces 10 years penitentiary time. There is no parole in federal sentences. The conviction also carries a \$250,000 fine.

For more information: [www.usdoj.gov/usao/txs/texasexile.com](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/txs/texasexile.com)

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## Federal Firearms Violations

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**HPD Officer Paul Cromwell** was flagged down by a woman at the Western Inn motel. The woman described a young man with numerous tattoos who put a gun to her head and threatened to kill her. Officer Cromwell arrested **Charles Jones** in a motel room. He was convicted in federal court of being a felon in possession of a firearm, and is in custody pending sentence.

**Quentin Hampton**, was found guilty by a jury after being tried as a felon in possession of a firearm. Hampton was stopped for a traffic violation when HPD officers noticed the butt of a pistol protruding from under the driver's seat. He has twice been convicted of aggravated robbery. Sentencing is set for September 5.

HPD Officers executed a narcotics search warrant at **Armando Sierra's** residence. Sierra was arrested leaving the apartment with over \$2000 cash in his pockets. Investigators found 6 grams of cocaine and two pistols in his residence. Sierra had a felony drug conviction in Ft Bend County. He pled guilty and is to be sentenced on Sept. 18 before U.S. District Judge Kenneth Hoyt.

HPD was dispatched to an apartment complex in Houston. When the officers arrived they spoke to a witness who described gunshots from an apartment. Further investigation led to the arrest of **Maximilian Luviano** and seizure of a shotgun from his apartment. He pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Lee Rosenthal of being an alien unlawfully in the U.S. in possession of a firearm.

HPD Officers were dispatched to Lonnie Lane where they were met by a witness who stated that the occupants of a van parked at that location had threatened her with a gun. Officers found a shotgun in the van and arrested **Marvin Holmes**, 22, of Houston. He pled guilty in federal court to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

**Alton Ray Hensley**, attempted to purchase a shotgun from Mr. Money Gun and Pawn in Freeport when he falsely stated that he had never been convicted of a felony offense. A computer background revealed Hensley was a convicted felon. Hensley of Brazoria pled guilty to the felony offense of making a false statement in the attempted acquisition of a firearm. Hensley will be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Sim Lake in September.

**Larry Hedspeth** sold \$30 worth of crack cocaine to an undercover HPD Officer. Officers arrested him at the scene and found him to be in possession of 2.8 grams of crack cocaine and a handgun. Hedspeth, 20, pled guilty to Possession with Intent to Distribute crack cocaine and carrying a firearm during a drug trafficking crime. He will be sentenced in September.

HPD Officers were dispatched to an apartment complex where they saw **Mitchell Daugherty** standing outside an apartment. Daugherty told the officers everything was fine. Two women in the apartment, however, reported that Daugherty had been threatening them. Officers saw an assault rifle in Daugherty's truck and later determined that he had a prior felony conviction. Daugherty was convicted in federal court and is in custody pending sentencing.

An HPD officer on patrol heard a gunshot and during a chase saw **Paul Hamilton** throw a gun out the window of the car. He was arrested a few blocks later. Hamilton pled guilty to being a felon in possession and will be sentenced in September.

On April 17, **Garry Wells** went to an apartment at Barker Cypress in Houston with the intention to kill a man. The intended victim escaped by jumping out a second story window and running away. Police arrested Wells and recovered a shotgun. Wells, of Houston, pled guilty and will be sentenced on September 22. Wells has been previously convicted of Possession of a Controlled Substance, Burglary and Larceny.

A Houston Metro bus driver reported that a passenger on his bus was carrying a pistol. An HPD Officer went to the area and found a man fitting the bus driver's description. The officers searched **Kurtis Allan Nichols** and found a pistol in his pocket. Nichols entered a guilty plea to possession of a firearm after having been convicted of a felony. Judge Nancy Atlas set the sentencing for September 15.

An HPD Officer noticed a car backed into a parking space in front of a doctor's office overnight. In the course of the investigation, the officer found a pistol in **Tommy Gene Baker's** pocket. Baker had been previously convicted of cocaine possession. He entered a guilty plea and faces 10 years in federal prison.

**Steven Ross Fachorn** purchased a rifle at Texas Jewelry and Loan in College Station. He submitted a Federal firearms questionnaire and falsely stated he had never been convicted of domestic violence. He took possession of the rifle which was eventually taken from him by ATF agents during the course of an arson investigation. Fachorn pled guilty to violating Federal firearms statutes. He faces up to 10 years on each of the two counts, and fines up to \$500,000.

**David George Hairston** of Brownsville illegally pawned a rifle at a local pawn shop. Hairston has previous convictions for smuggling aliens and drug possession. Hairston was found guilty by a federal jury of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Hairston is scheduled for sentencing on August 16 before U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela.

A Harris County Deputy Constable investigated a report that three gang members threatened residents of a house in which they had been drinking beer. The gang members left, promising to return with a gun and shoot up the house. A Constable stopped **Miguel Rodriguez'** car near the scene and arrested three occupants. A sawed-off shotgun was discovered in the car. **Rodriguez** was found guilty of possession of an unregistered short barrel firearm.

## **RECENT FIREARMS INDICTMENTS**

**Marion Louis Roy, Jr.** was indicted by a federal grand jury for providing a false statement to a federal firearms licensee in connection with the acquisition of a firearm.

**Ray Arthur Mitchell, Henry Linette Walker, Otha Lee Cooper** and **Keith Wilson** were indicted by a federal grand jury for the offense of possessing a firearm after having been convicted of a felony.

Firearms Prosecutors: Ashley Chapman, Jay Hileman, Abe Martinez, Oscar Ponce and Richard Harris.  
Agencies: ATF & Columbus P.D., HPD, Brownsville PD., Fort Bend Co. Sheriff's Office, and Harris Co. Constable.

## **D** **RUG TASK FORCE**

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) is one of the oldest and most successful working groups of local, state and Federal investigative agencies whose mission is to dismantle major drug organizations. Houston is headquarters for the Southwest OCDETF Region which includes Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and southern California.

### **Ring Leader Receives 26 Years in Prison**

Anthony Clark, 24, was sentenced after he pled guilty to distributing crack cocaine and carrying a firearm during a drug trafficking crime. Clark supplied over half a kilo of crack to HPD undercover officers working with DEA. AUSA Mark McIntyre; AGENCY: DEA & HPD.

### **Drug dealer Gets Almost 20 Years in Prison**

Agents seized 23 kilos of cocaine in Houston, and over 500 pounds of marijuana in Brownsville during an undercover investigation that involved court-ordered wire

interception of telephones. Manuel Martinez was sentenced to 235 months after he entered a guilty plea for drug trafficking. Martinez supervised individuals within the organization, justifying an enhanced sentence. AUSA: Jody Young; AGENCY: DEA & US Customs.

### **Three from Nuevo Laredo Sentenced to Over 10 Years for Cocaine Distribution**

Francisco Castro, a dentist, and Manuel Johnson Cardenas, a food vendor, pled guilty and were sentenced to 135 months for cocaine trafficking and laundering over \$3 million in drug proceeds. Sergio Avila, a veterinarian, was convicted after a jury trial and sentenced to 168 months. The government has filed forfeiture actions for the \$3 million. AUSA Mary Lou Castillo; AGENCY: DEA & Texas DPS-Narcotics Unit.

### **Trio found with Guns and Marijuana**

U. S. District Judge Hayden Head sentenced Mitchell Bailey of Spartanburg to 135 months after his guilty plea for drug trafficking. Donald Davis and Rodney Frady also pled guilty and received ten years. The three were apprehended by the Border Patrol Agents in Falfurrias who found 1200 kilos of marijuana and two handguns. Defendants claimed to have made a prior successful marijuana run several weeks earlier. AUSA Jon Muschenheim; AGENCY: DEA & Border Patrol.

### **Ten Years for Member of Moreno-Riojas Organization**

A member of a drug trafficking organization of Starr County utilized pick-up trucks which were outfitted to resemble oilfield trucks in order to circumvent the border patrol checkpoints. Ismael Guerra, of Roma, who was indicted in Houston along with 78 other members of his organization in late 1996 was sentenced by U. S. District Judge Melinda Harmon to 10 years after his conviction. AUSA Judi Lombardino; AGENCY: OCDETF.

### **Drug Transporter Receives 121 Months**

Jose Navarro was charged in Corpus Christi with possession with intent to distribute approximately 107 grams of cocaine. He was sentenced by U. S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack to 121 months in federal prison. AUSA: Robert Galvan; AGENCY: DEA.

### **Over 11 Years for over 3 Tons of Marijuana**

Hector Ramirez was sentenced in McAllen to 135

months for his part of the distribution of 7,000 pounds of marijuana. AUSA: Jaime Pena; AGENCY: FBI and DEA.

### **Parolee Gets 9 Years Federal Time**

Odis Johnson, Jr., a/k/a "Tink", 55 of Madisonville, was on parole for aggravated robbery and murder when he was caught delivering 60 grams of crack cocaine. U. S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore sentenced him to 108 months after he pled guilty. He was reputed to be one of the largest crack dealers in Madisonville. AUSA Jeff Vaden; AGENCY: FBI & Central East Texas Narcotics Task Force.

### **Canine Find Nets 10 Years**

A canine alerted agents at the Laredo checkpoint. Human investigation resulted in the seizure of 55 pounds of cocaine. 22 bundles of cocaine were concealed in the doors of Juan Ignacio Cuentas' Ford Taurus. Chief Judge George Kazen sentenced Cuentas to 10 years after he pled guilty to cocaine trafficking. AUSA Dixie Morrow; AGENCY: DEA & Border Patrol.

### **Weigh Station Stop Reveals Load**

Daniel Virjan, of Laredo, was driving a tractor-trailer with a load of merchandise. When he stopped at a mandatory weigh station in Missouri, Troopers noticed the seal number did not match the number on the shipment's bill of lading. A search of the trailer revealed the legitimate load of merchandise also included 24 boxes with a total 1620 pounds of marijuana. Virjan pled guilty and was sentenced to 95 months by Chief U. S. District Judge George Kazen. AUSA Andy Guardiola; AGENCY: DEA & Missouri Hwy Patrol.

### **Tiki Island Policeman and Bail Bondsman Convicted**

Former Police Officer Ray Cruz and his younger brother Marcus Cruz were convicted of marijuana and cocaine trafficking. Just before jury selection, Mario Espinosa, a cousin, pled guilty to smuggling 72 lbs of marijuana. The Cruz brothers face life in prison and fines up to \$2 million. Sentencing is set for the three September 15. AUSA Kenneth Dies; AGENCY: Galveston PD & DEA.

### **Three Tons of Marijuana! How did THAT get in here?**

Anthony Grant, a truck driver from Philadelphia, was convicted of possessing over 6,000 pounds of marijuana. The cargo was discovered at the Falfurrias

Border Patrol Check Point, but Grant claimed to have no knowledge of the drugs in his truck. He will be sentenced later this year. AUSA: Mark Patterson; AGENCY: DEA.

### **Canine Finds 19 Bundles of Cocaine**

A checkpoint search recovered 19 bundles of cocaine with a street value over \$1 million hidden in the gas tank of Rodolfo Barajas' Durango after a canine alerted agents. A jury returned a guilty verdict after two days of testimony against Barajas of Monclova, Coahuila. He is facing 10 years to life due to the amount of cocaine. AUSA: Dixie Morrow; AGENCY: DEA & Border Patrol.

### **Supplier Beware**

Devan Lee Davis, 26, of Houston, attempted to supply 194 grams of crack to HPD undercover officers. The officers represented themselves as crack cocaine distributors from Louisiana. Davis was convicted of distributing crack cocaine and is awaiting sentencing. AUSA: Mark McIntyre; AGENCY: DEA & HPD.

### **Northbound Marijuana Stopped at Brownsville**

Customs Agents working the pre-primary area of the International Bridge noticed a compartment built into the rear portion of **Juan DeLaFuente's** 1972 VW Beetle. Further inspection resulted in the discovery of 58 pounds of marijuana. A jury found DeLaFuente, 24, guilty of importing the marijuana into the U.S. He faces up to 5 years and a fine up to \$250,000. AUSA: Lynn Kirkpatrick; AGENCY: U. S. Customs.

**Jose Guadalupe Castro** was found guilty of importing 83 pounds of marijuana from Mexico into U.S. Castillo faces up to 5 years. AUSA Joe Esquivel. AGENCY: U.S. Customs.

### **36 Pounds of Meth Hidden in Mustang**

Alberto Hernandez of Brownsville, was coming from Matamoros when 38 packages of methamphetamine were found hidden in different compartments of his Ford Mustang. He pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela to possession of over 36 pounds of meth and faces 10 years to life and a fine up to \$4 million. AUSA Joe Esquivel; AGENCY: US Customs.

### **Tulia Man Guilty of Marijuana Trafficking**

A drug detection dog alerted Border Patrol agents at the checkpoint near Freer of contraband when Belton Finney's Mack tractor trailer was stopped. Finney pled guilty after agents found 402 bundles of marijuana

weighing nearly a ton in the ceiling of his trailer. He faces up to 40 years in prison. AUSA: Marina Garcia Marmolejo; AGENCY: DEA & Border Patrol.

### **McAllen Marijuana Distributor**

William Salem, 47, pled guilty to possession with intent to distribute over 1000 kilos of marijuana and 12 kilos of cocaine. He faces up to life in federal prison and fines up to \$4 million dollars. AUSA: Robert Galvan; AGENCY: DEA.

### **Brownsville Woman Guilty**

Rosa Maria Munoz pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Hilda Tagle to distributing 20 pounds of cocaine. She faces 10 years to life and up to \$4 million in fines at sentencing in September. AUSA: Jose Esquivel; AGENCY: U. S. Customs.

### **OCDETF Operation Results in Ecstasy Seizure**

An OCDETF investigation resulted in four individuals being charged in a four count indictment with possession with intent to distribute and importation of Ecstasy. The indictment charges the individuals with being couriers who were part of an international smuggling operation that transported large quantities of ecstasy into the country from Europe. Named as the ringleader of the organization is Jacob Orgad, an Israeli emigre, who operated in Los Angeles, New York, and Europe, and who is currently charged in Los Angeles. A quantity of Ecstasy was seized in Houston and McAllen. The defendants face 20 years in prison and fines up to a \$1 million. AUSA: Mark McIntyre; AGENCY: OCDETF & HIDTA.

### **HIDTA Investigation Uncovers Drug Conspiracy**

Four Rio Grande Valley men and a woman were arrested in McAllen by agents of the High Intensity Drug Task Force. A partially unsealed indictment alleges these defendants and others participated in a controlled substances conspiracy involving over 2000 kilos of marijuana between 1997 and 1999. If convicted, the defendants face 10 years to life. AUSA: Jaime Pena; AGENCY: HIDTA.

### **DEA Seize 130 Pounds of Cocaine in Brownsville**

July 1<sup>st</sup>, DEA agents seized approximately 130 pounds of cocaine outside of Brownsville, and arrested Michael Bohannon, of Houston. AUSA: Jody Young; AGENCY: DEA.

### **25 Bundles of Cocaine Hidden in Car Doors**

On July 4<sup>th</sup> Pedro Luis Reyes approached the IH35 checkpoint north of Laredo in a Chrysler sedan. A canine alerted agents to the car and it was referred to secondary inspection. Agents searched the doors and found a total of 25 bundles of cocaine, weighing approximately 65 pounds, located in the front and rear doors, and behind the backrest of the back seat. Reyes, 22 of Miami, was indicted by a federal grand jury and faces 10 years to life and up to a \$4 million fine. AUSA: Jim Noble; AGENCY: DEA.

### **Rio Grande Valley Lawyer Guilty of Drug Conspiracy**

Juan Ledesma of Mission pled guilty before U. S. District Judge Ricardo Hinojosa to his participation in drug trafficking involving over 2000 kilograms of marijuana and 2.5 kilograms of cocaine. He faces 10 years to life in prison at sentencing on October 19<sup>th</sup>. AUSA: Jaime Pena & Terry Leonard; AGENCY: HIDTA & OCDETF.

### **Trial Set in August for Brownsville Men**

Two Brownsville men were indicted for distributing over 1,000 kilos of marijuana and over 5 kilos of cocaine. If convicted, they face 10 years and up to \$4 million in fines. AUSA: Jody Young; AGENCY: FBI & US Customs.

### **Woman Caught with Cocaine at Airport**

A woman traveling from Laredo to Charleston, South Carolina was arrested at Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport after agents discovered over 11 kilograms of cocaine in her suitcases. The woman, from Monterrey, Mexico faces trial and a possible 10 years to life in prison and fines up to \$4 million if convicted. AUSA: Mel Pechacek; AGENCY: DEA.

### **Keeping it Cool**

A Houston man was arrested after DEA agents recovered 5 ounces of crack cocaine hidden in a thermos bottle found in a car he was driving. He fled after being stopped by HPD but was arrested after a brief chase. The defendant is in custody pending trial, and if convicted faces a mandatory 10 years to life and fines up to \$4 million. AUSA: Mel Pechacek; AGENCY: DEA & HPD.



### **Four Charged with Distributing Crack Cocaine**

Four Houston men ages 25 to 52 were indicted for distributing over 50 grams of crack cocaine. The federal charges carry a sentence of 10 years to life in prison. AUSA: Glenn Cook; DEA & Houston PD.

## **E**conomic Crimes

### **Investment Scheme Nets Man 15 Years**

David Schellhaas of Houston convinced several groups of investors from around the country to give him \$7 million to invest in a "secured high yield investment program". The investors' money was to be placed in an offshore trading program in Europe. He promised the investors large returns on their investments in a short time frame. The evidence showed that no such investment programs existed and that Schellhaas completely defrauded the investors. U.S. District Judge Melinda Harmon sentenced David Schellhaas to 190 months after he was convicted by a jury of wire fraud and money laundering. The sentence imposed in this case is one of the highest sentences to be imposed in a fraud case in our district. AUSA: Julie Bowen Stern; AGENCY: IRS.

### **Federal Fugitive Sentenced for Mail Fraud**

U.S. Postal Inspectors arrested Myrick Clift Beasley of Houston after a two year investigation. Beasley had escaped from a federal prison camp in California in 1990, where he was serving a two-year sentence for mail fraud. In November 1999, he was indicted for devising and executing a scheme to defraud individuals throughout the U.S. in connection with the promotion of a fraudulent travel distributorship program. Beasley was sentenced to 51 months in prison for mail fraud and ordered to make restitution of over \$299,000. AUSA: John Braddock; AGENCY: U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

### **Honduran Man Sentenced For Forgery**

Victor Amaya was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Sim Lake to four months imprisonment for having forged a signature on a U.S. Treasury check that had been stolen from the mail. AUSA: John Lewis; AGENCY: US Postal Inspectors & US Secret Service.

### **Maquiladora Employee to Pay Restitution**

Daryl Price was a management employee of Antespec, S.A. de C.V., Reynosa, Mexico, a subsidiary of Allen Telecom, when he took monies from Antespec bank accounts in Mexico and transferred them into U.S. accounts he controlled. In McAllen, U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela ordered Price to pay \$547,366 in restitution to Allen Telecom and sentenced Price to 18 months after he pled guilty to transporting monies obtained by fraud. AUSA: Charles L. Dause; AGENCY: FBI & IRS.

### **Embezzling Checks from Disabled Veteran**

Peri Rideaux, of Houston, was appointed as the DVA fiduciary for Willis Collier's military pension and disability benefit checks. She obtained and cashed Collier's benefit checks, totaling about \$7,846, spending all of the money on personal items. Investigation revealed that Rideaux continued to receive, cash, and use Mr. Collier's veteran benefit checks for another 6 months after he was removed from her care. U.S. District Judge David Hittner sentenced her to 18 months and ordered her to pay the victim's family restitution of \$7,846. Judge Hittner also ordered her to serve 500 hours of community service after release from prison. Judge Hittner enhanced Rideaux's sentence above the normal sentence for her crimes, for two separate reasons, a) she took advantage of a vulnerable disabled victim, and b) she abused a position of special trust as a fiduciary she had with her victim. AUSA: Mike Schultz; AGENCY: VA OIG.

### **Counterfeit Nike, Reebok, & Hilfiger Shirts**

Stewart Greenwood was screen printing thousands of shirts and sweatshirts bearing counterfeit brand named trademarked logos such as Nike, Tommy Hilfiger and Reebok. Greenwood, of Galveston, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Nancy F. Atlas to 18 months imprisonment after his conviction of trafficking in counterfeit goods. AUSA: John Lewis; AGENCY: US Customs Service.

### **Auto Dealership Manager Caught in Fraud**

An Office Manager of an automobile dealership in Bryan caused fraudulent invoices to be paid to accounts in the name of fictitious companies. Charles White stole approximately \$1.5 million during his ten years of employment. Two properties he purchased with proceeds have been seized. He was convicted and faces up to 30 years and fines up to \$1 million at sentencing in October. AUSA: Cedric Joubert & Bill Yahner; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Stolen Rental Car with Stolen Credit Cards**

Horacio DeHoyos-Orozco was arrested after attempting to leave the country at the Hidalgo Port in a rental vehicle that had been reported stolen from a Houston area car rental agency. DeHoyos pled guilty after agents found 6 counterfeit credit cards in his possession and another 28 counterfeit credit cards in the vehicle. Sentencing is scheduled in August before U. S. District Judge Ricardo Hinojosa. DeHoyos faces up to 10 years and fines up to \$250,000 and restitution of any losses. AUSA: Charles Dause; AGENCY: US Secret Service.

### **False Identities in Bank Fraud Scheme**

Using identities and social security numbers of other individuals without their knowledge, a Houston couple was able to obtain an \$8,200 loan. They submitted false employment and salary information to the bank in addition to using a false Mississippi drivers' licenses. Monique Lusk and Edward Walker pled guilty to a scheme to defraud Wells Fargo Bank. She faces 30 years in prison and fines of up to \$1 million. Walker will be sentenced on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and faces 5 years and up to \$250,000 fine for conspiracy. AUSA: John Braddock; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Bank VP Buys Merchandise with Customer Funds**

Ruben Garza, an Assistant Vice President of IBC Bank, handled the private banking of several U.S. and Mexican companies. Garza debited accounts without the account holder's permission, and acquire cashier checks with which he purchased merchandise for himself and his family. He pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela to embezzling \$189,000. As part of the plea, Garza agreed to forfeit criminal proceeds. Garza faces up to 30 years and a fine up to \$1 million. AUSA: Ron Morgan; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Corpus Christi Man Collects Deceased Mother's Social Security**

Robert Morgan, 63, collected his mother's Social Security benefits from the time of her death in Dec. 1992 until Sept. 1999. Morgan pled guilty to stealing \$27,231. As part of the plea agreement, Morgan agreed to pay restitution. He faces up to 10 years at sentencing in September. AUSA: Jon Muschenheim; AGENCY: OIG for SSA.

### **Mexico City Man Provides Satellite TV**

Jose Luis Solache Fortuna was involved in a scheme in Houston to program 500 computer cards that

would allow viewers to illegally obtain free satellite television service from Galaxy Latin America, an affiliate of Direct TV. Solache pled guilty and will be sentenced in October. AUSA: John Lewis; AGENCY: US Customs.

### **The Check Was in the Mail**

Melody Blackstock, of Humble, a former letter carrier, pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Melinda Harmon to embezzling mail. The maximum penalty for each offense is imprisonment of up to 5 years and a fine up to \$250,000. Sentencing is set for September 15<sup>th</sup>. AUSA: Charles Escher; AGENCY: US Postal Service.

### **Houston Woman Guilty Of Mail Tampering**

Lisa Darcel Baker pled guilty to one count of destroying or opening mail. U.S. District Judge Rosenthal set sentencing for September 12<sup>th</sup>. She faces up to 5 years and a fine up to \$250,000. AUSA: Charles Escher; AGENCY: US Postal Service.

### **Cashing Stolen U. S. Treasury Check**

Victor Amaya, of Houston, pled guilty to one count of forging a signature on a U.S. Treasury check. Amaya admitted attempting to cash a U.S. Treasury check that had been stolen from the mail. Amaya will be sentenced August 24, by U. S. District Judge Sim Lake. AUSA: John Lewis; AGENCY: U.S. Postal Inspectors & U.S. Secret Service.

### **"Free" Satellite TV Programmer Faces Loss of Own Freedom**

Joe Castro, of Miami, was charged with illegally programming cards that allow consumers to obtain free satellite television. He faces up to 15 years and fines up to \$500,000. AUSA: John Lewis; AGENCY: U.S. Customs.

### **Houston Area Fraud Task Force (HAFTF)**

Individuals representing themselves as West African and desiring to invest \$15.5 million in America were indicted after contacting their victim via e-mail. In this particular case, it is alleged that the victim communicated with several individuals using e-mail, fax, and telephone for several months. The victim was eventually requested to produce \$23,000 for a "processing fee" and the \$15.5 million dollars would be released to the victim to invest. The victim was also promised a percentage for his personal use. Working with members of the HAFTF, the victim was flown to Houston where a meeting was arranged with the defendants. The meeting

monitored by HAFTF agents, resulted in the arrests. The case was initiated when a potential victim in a different state contacted federal law enforcement in Houston. AUSA: John Lewis; AGENCY: Houston Area Fraud Task Force.

### **Forgery and Fraud in Bankruptcy**

A Houston man was indicted for bankruptcy fraud, bank fraud, and forgery. He failed to disclose two pieces of real estate he owned in his bankruptcy petition and forged the signature of a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge on a document he created, then used that document in a scheme to defraud Metro Bank in Houston. If convicted, he could be sentenced to 30 years in prison and fined up to \$1 million. AUSA: Al Balboni; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Stealing from the IRS**

Four Houston men stole a \$240,000 check from the IRS in Los Angeles. They then counterfeited and forged a copy of that check but made it payable to Meyerland Auto and deposited it into Citizens National Bank in Bellaire. When the check cleared, one of the defendants withdrew the proceeds and divided the proceeds with the other defendants. In addition to paying restitution to the victims, the maximum statutory sentences defendants face up to 30 years prison and fines of up to \$3 million. AUSA: John Wagner; AGENCY: Treasury IG for Tax Administration, Laguna Niguel (California).

### **Fraudulent Statements on Loan Application**

A Laredo man was indicted for fraudulent statements on a loan application to the Laredo National Bank. The maximum statutory sentence the defendant faces is up to 30 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine. AUSA: Marina Garcia Marmolejo; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Jail Time for Failure to Report Business Income**

Richard Higgins, Jr. was sentenced to five months imprisonment and five months home confinement for filing a false income tax return with the IRS. Higgins pled guilty and admitted that he failed to report over \$106,000 in receipts from his business, Higgins Photography. Higgins avoided over \$200,00 in taxes by failing to report the business receipts. AUSA: Albert Balboni; AGENCY: IRS.

### **Mother & Daughter Indicted For Tax Fraud**

Two women were indicted in a conspiracy to defraud the government of tax revenues, making false statements, and aiding and abetting the making of false statements on tax return filings. They each face 5 years in prison and fines up to \$250,000. AUSA: Andrew Bobb; AGENCY: IRS.

### **Houston Man Indicted For Embezzlement**

An employee of Frost National Bank in Houston was indicted for embezzlement. He allegedly altered deposit slips from Sellers Brothers Food Market without the knowledge and consent of Frost National Bank or Sellers Brothers Food Market. The maximum statutory sentence defendant faces is 30 years in prison and a fine up to \$1 million. AUSA: Cedric Joubert; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Three Charged in Scheme to Steal Computer Equipment**

A Houston man was charged with organizing a fraudulent scheme to steal computer equipment from various computer retailers. According to the indictment, a person involved in the scheme pretended to be an employee of a Houston company called Barri Remittance Corp., and used Barri Remittance's credit to purchase computer equipment. Equipment was actually delivered to a storage facility rented by another person who was using a false identification. Two others were indicted for their role in scheme. They face a maximum statutory sentence of up to 5 years and fines of up to \$250,000. AUSA: John Lewis; AGENCY: U.S. Secret Service.

To report suspected instances of Medicaid fraud, the Office of the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit may be contacted at (512) 463-2011. Additionally, such instances of fraud may be reported via e-mail at [mfcu@oag.state.tx.us](mailto:mfcu@oag.state.tx.us).

## **S**pecial Prosecution

**Criminal prosecutions involving civil rights, public corruption, organized crime and environmental laws are the responsibility of the Special Prosecutions Section**

### **Female Smuggling for Prostitution**

An international smuggling ring based in Bangkok, Thailand, led by a female and two males, smuggled females from Thailand and China into the U. S. Kuok Tiong Lim of Bangkok used his contacts with immigration officials in Bangkok to smuggle Chinese nationals into the U.S. and to fraudulently obtain documents and facilitate the movement of aliens out of Thailand. The females from Thailand were expected to work at modeling studios in Houston until their smuggling fees were paid in full. INS and FBI agents arrested Lim in Miami following his arrival from Santiago, Chile. Lim was negotiating with undercover agents to deliver 9 Chinese nationals to the U.S. and had traveled to Chile to purchase immigration documents. Phan who pled guilty to transporting aliens will be sentenced on October 30<sup>th</sup> and faces up to ten years imprisonment and fines up to \$500,000. Lim of Bangkok and Phiet The Mai of Houston, pled guilty to conspiracy charges. Mai faces deportation to Vietnam and Lim faces deportation to Malaysia. AUSA: Edward Gallagher; AGENCY: FBI & DOJ Alien Smuggling Task Force.

### **TDHCA Board Member Charged with Bribery**

A board member of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and her business partners were indicted for bribery, theft, mail fraud and money laundering. The indictment alleges the board member was accepting money and property in exchange for her support of an application for tax credits submitted to the TDHCA board which voted on approval of those applications. The seven count indictment charged that she conspired with co-defendants to form a company that would be a part of a development team that would submit a proposal to TDHCA to build low income housing, the award of which would result in receipt of valuable tax credits. Trial is set for October 16<sup>th</sup> before U. S. District Judge Nancy Atlas; AUSA Gary Cobe; AGENCY: FBI & Texas DPS.

### **Two Houston Men Plead Guilty To Extortion**

David Van Nguyen and others extorted money from the owner of Vu Bida Billiards demanding \$400 a month in protection money. Nguyen, 18, and Lac Hong Tran, 27, pled guilty to a conspiracy involving extortion of money from a local business. Nguyen and Tran are one of four defendants indicted in March for conspiring to obtain money by threat of force, violence, and fear. Nguyen is scheduled to be sentenced on August 25<sup>th</sup> and faces up to 20 years imprisonment and fines up to \$250,000. Tran is scheduled to be sentenced on September 15<sup>th</sup> and faces up to 340 years imprisonment and fines up to \$4.25 million. Trial for Dinh is set for August 24<sup>th</sup>. Hien Tan Hoang remains at large. AUSA: Edward Gallagher; AGENCY: FBI & Harris Co. Sheriff's Office.

### **Extortionist Charged With Witness Intimidation**

Hien Tan Hoang, 19, of Houston, previously charged along with three others for extorting cash from a local business, has now been charged with witness tampering. Hoang is accused of using intimidation and physical force to prevent the testimony of the extortion victim in an official proceeding. Hoang remains at large and the FBI and Harris County Sheriff's Office are seeking help from the public to locate Hoang. He is considered armed and dangerous. U. S. Attorney Mervyn Mosbacker and the law enforcement community is reaching out to victims of economic extortion and asks anyone having information about this crime call the FBI at 713/693-5000. AUSA: Edward Gallagher; AGENCY: FBI & Harris Co. Sheriff's Office.



**Hien Tan Hoang**

### **Immigration Attorney Convicted of Visa Fraud**

U. S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore sentenced Justin Jin-Lin Ong to four months in prison, four months home confinement, and a fine of \$7,500. Ong was convicted of visa fraud and filing a fraudulent income tax return following a guilty plea for a scheme to defraud his clients and the INS. Ong operated an immigration law practice in Houston, representing a number of Chinese aliens who sought immigration visas and permanent residence in the U.S. Ong previously admitted to giving two clients false immigration documents in order to facilitate their admission at Houston Community College. The University verified the documents with INS authorities and the identification numbers did not match the names on the forms. Ong also admitted that he failed to pay income tax for income amounting to over \$600,000 earned by his law practice. As part of Ong's sentence, he surrendered his license to practice law; agreed to payback taxes with penalty and interest. AUSA: Edward Gallagher; AGENCY: US Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, FBI, IRS-CID, INS, US Dept. of Labor.

### **12th Man Sentenced For Check-Cashing Scheme**

Man Tat Le received 7 years and ordered to pay \$72,200 while Dung Van To, 21, was sentenced to 34 months and fined \$1,000. Le and To were convicted in Houston of money laundering conspiracy charges earlier this year along with thirteen co-defendants. When local authorities arrested some of the Le's co-defendants for attempting to cash Wells Fargo Bank counterfeit checks at a local Kroger grocery store in April 1999, Le recruited another group to continue the scheme. Le was convicted as the leader of both counterfeit check-cashing rings. Losses to the banks exceed \$80,000. AUSA: Edward Gallagher & James Buchanan; AGENCY: FBI.

### **Buying On-Line with Counterfeit Checks**

Sikan Essien, admitted that between a two year period he issued three counterfeit checks totaling about \$185,000. The counterfeit checks were deposited in Houston; a third party would then withdraw the money and split the proceeds. The checks were also used to buy products on-line. Following a search of Essien's residence, a counterfeit check in the amount of \$9,198.75 was found among his belongings. Essien faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count. AUSA: James Buchanan; AGENCY: FBI.

## **CIVIL LITIGATION**

### **U. S. Settles False Claims Matter Dentist**

Missouri City dentist, Lance Quan Jue, billed Medicaid for full sets of X-rays not taken for 85 claims. According to the settlement, Dr. Jue submitted fraudulent claims for reimbursement for juvenile Medicaid patients. Dr. Jue paid \$17,500 to the U.S. and executed a corporate integrity agreement. AUSA: Jill Venezia; AGENCY: TX Fraud Control Unit.

### **In Re Seafood Grocery Market**

The United States obtained a summary judgment in this food stamp trafficking case. The store was ordered to pay \$81,000 for violations of the false claim act. AUSA: John Kinchen; AGENCY: FNS.

### **Cornel v. West**

Federal case filed by disgruntled VA employees for alleged violation of rights. According to the employees' allegations, supervisors were held to a different standard of discipline than subordinates at the VA. The U.S. Attorney's Office represented the VA and filed a motion to dismiss the case. The employees voluntarily dismissed their case. AUSA: Gordon Young; AGENCY: VA.

### **Heirs of Guerra v. USA**

Dispute over oil and mineral rights for land under the Falcon Reservoir in South Texas. After reversal by the Court of Appeals, Judge Vela granted the government's motion for entry of final judgment dismissing plaintiff's claims. AUSA: David Guerra and Charles Wendlendt. AGENCY: International Border Commission.

### **Pina v. Runyon**

Discrimination case involving family medical leave issues. The week prior to trial, U.S. Magistrate Judge Black granted the government's motion to dismiss the case. AUSA: Nancy Masso; Agency: US Postal Service.

### **Saenz v. Tombone**

Prisoner filed a lawsuit alleging deliberate indifference in medical treatment at the Federal Correctional Institution in Beaumont. The United States obtained dismissal of the multimillion dollar claim against the government. AUSA: Brad Howard; AGENCY: BOP.

### **US v. Ohm**

This is a SBA loan default case. United States obtained a judgment against Stephen Ohm amounting to \$175,317 for failure to pay back a loan.



## PROGRAMS DIVISION

### Operation Weed and Seed Launches the SEED TECH Program with Graduation of First Class

During the summer about 50 men and women attended an 8-week computer course at Houston's Weed and Seed Gulfton Community Center. The graduation of this first class was held at Citizens National Bank community center. The graduates had successfully completed the course that was offered to members of the Gulfton

community. The course initially taught students computer fundamentals. They go on to learn Microsoft Word, Graphics, and how to navigate the Internet. The course is accredited with UTC in Washington D.C.



### Department of Justice-Sponsored Summer Camps Initiate Program to Instill self-esteem and Awareness of Dangers of Substance Abuse

Children from the District's Weed and Seed communities participated in summer camps in a program called Drug Education for Youth or DEFY. The DEFY Program consists of both a summer camp and a year-long mentoring phase. The objective is to provide instruction in drug education, self-esteem development, peer leadership, and fitness. The program's goal is to assist young people in achieving the highest possible levels of education, while decreasing select risk factors such as illiteracy, dropout rates, teen pregnancy, and drug abuse.



**The U.S. Coast Guard Station in South Padre Island has the only Coast Guard Explorer/DEFY Program in the nation.**

The U.S. Attorney's Office, Brownsville Weed & Seed Program, U. S. Coast Guard, Cameron County Probation Department, Brownsville Police Department, and the Texas National Guard coordinated the DEFY program at the U. S. Coast Guard Station in South Padre Island.

The DEFY Program is being implemented throughout the district by the U.S. Attorney's Office and Weed and Seed along with the U.S. Coast Guard, the U. S. Army, San Antonio Fighting Back and the Texas National Guard. Through these partnerships DEFY Camps were held for kids from Weed and Seed communities of Houston, Corpus Christi, McAllen and Brownsville.



### **RIONet Update**

The Brownsville, McAllen, and Mission Police Departments are involved in an Internet-based information-sharing project known as RIONet. This project is funded by the Counter-Drug Technology Assessment Center, a division of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The continued project development will be re-contracted to the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Labs for completion. One key vision of the RIONet Project would be the expansion of information sharing with all police partners within the South Texas Region. RIONet envisions this expansion through the creation of information consortiums providing police information and records management services in a collective manner.

Another key vision of the RIONet project involves the creation of a societal information-sharing scheme in the form of geographical information. The information would be shared with members of the education, public health, other criminal justice service providers, and community-based programs such as Weed and Seed, and the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders Project.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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## **Southern District of Texas Attorneys and Agents Get National Honors at Department of Justice Ceremony**

### **Assistant U.S. Attorney Gordon Young Receives John Marshall Award from Attorney General Janet Reno**

The John Marshall Awards are the Department of Justice's highest award offered to attorneys for contributions and excellence in specialized areas of legal performance. At a ceremony in Washington July 28, 2000, Attorney General Janet Reno recognized AUSA Gordon Young of the Southern District of Texas for his role in the trial team that demonstrated "extraordinary skill" in litigation related to the record breaking Koch Industries case. In settlement of the case stemming from oil spills from its pipeline system, Koch Industries agreed to pay \$30 million in fines and \$5 million on environmental projects.

### **Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth Magidson Honored for Leadership in Coordinated Multi-Agency Drug Investigations.**

AUSA Kenneth Magidson has been a part of the District's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) since its inception in 1983. During this time, he led many of the most significant cases targeting major drug trafficking organizations, and served as national OCDETF director for one year in Washington, DC. He currently is coordinator for the Southwest OCDETF Region which includes Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and southern California. OCDETF, one of the nation's oldest and most successful working groups of local, state and Federal investigative agencies, honored AUSA Magidson in July with the Director's Award.

### **Special Agents Honored for Heroism**

DEA Special Agent Joseph Dubois and FBI Supervisory Special Agent Daniel Fuentes were honored at the Department of Justice's Award Ceremony for Exceptional Heroism. Attorney General Janet Reno publically recognized their extraordinary acts of courage in a standoff with fifteen armed men lead by the notorious Mexican drug trafficker Osiel Cardenas. Their voluntary risk of life in performance of difficult drug investigations in South Texas and Mexico inspire our respect and admiration.



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